CJO1456 – Crown Jewel Uganda Organic Kapchorwa Sipi Falls Raised Bed Honey

November 5, 2021 | See This Coffee Online Here

Overview

This is a traditional honey coffee from Mt. Elgon, Uganda, grown by smallholders organized around the Sipi Falls wet mill. The coffee is certified organic.

The flavor profile is sweet and consistent, with a range of flavors depending on roasting style and brew method. We noted Molasses, Apricot, and Black Tea.

Our roasters found the coffee's high density to warrant some extra attention and recommend a balanced ratio of drying and Maillard phases.

When brewed, the coffee proved complex and delicious as conical pour-over and bypassed Aeropress.

Taste Analysis by Colin Cahill

Distinctly and immediately recognizable as an East African coffee, this represents some of the nicest coffee grown, picked, and processed in Uganda. Reflecting the precision and standards of a leading wet mill and the quirky surprises of honey processing, this is a coffee of pleasing contradictions. Its sweetness, consistent and dependable chocolate notes, and range of flavors that can be brought out through roasting and brewing variation make it a particularly fun coffee for service, whether as an espresso, a pour over, or a unique cold brew. Expect to encounter tropical fruits, candy, and a bit of the unexpected.

Source Analysis by Charlie Habegger

Mount Elgon is a massive peak split nearly in two by the border of Uganda and Kenya. The "mountain" itself, now an extinct shield volcano, is more an enormous expanse of successive plateaus that float dramatically above the

surrounding valley floor. It is also home to a dense patchwork of farming communities growing some of the best organic coffee in Africa.

Sipi Falls, named after the mountain's most famous waterfall just down the road, is a centralized wet mill located in the Kapchorwa district that buys and processes cherry from more than 8,600 organic and diversified farms across the northern part of the mountain with an average of 0.2 hectares of coffee apiece and ranging from 1450-2200 meters in elevation. The sheer volume of quality coffee produced by this single wet mill is a testament to the truly ideal conditions of elevation, biological wealth, and human experience that abound between the farmers and Sipi Falls' management team. Not to mention the ingenious business model itself, which, more than 20 years after its founding, continues to be a leader in affordable, certified coffee of the highest quality on the continent.

The vast majority of coffee processed at Sipi Falls is fully washed but starting in 2016 the quality team at the mill started tinkering with honey and natural processed cherry. These coffees trickled out into the world at first with very little fanfare, in what could only be considered a side project for Sipi Falls; however, with a few years under their belt, there is now an annual portfolio of honey, natural, and custom washed coffees that masterfully showcase the full spectrum of Elgon's high-elevation terroir. The naturals in particular can be some of the best in Africa, which, with Ethiopia nearby, is saying a lot.

Cherry for this custom process comes from select grower communities within Sipi Falls' greater catchment area which are located at very high elevations and who have a track record of impeccable harvesting. Upon delivery to the wet mill the day's cherry is meticulously sorted and floated for density before being washed clean and queued for depulping. Rather than ferment overnight in the wet mill's network of long ceramic-lined tanks, the depulped parchment is transferred to the mill's screen tables to dry. Originally constructed on an unused slope of mill property, the raised drying tables have multiplied as the natural and honey volumes have grown, and now feature more permanent construction and a dedicated staff. The gooey parchment is laid in an even layer and consistently turned throughout the drying cycle. Constant turning helps to maintain even moisture evaporation and prevent the sticky mucilage from clumping together and trapping moisture inside, which can easily create mold in such conditions.

Once the full batch reaches 11% moisture content, all parchment is removed from the beds and conditioned in the warehouse on the wet mill property for multiple weeks. Each lot is tracked throughout its conditioning phase by Sipi Falls' quality manager, who cups and approves every lot at least once just after drying, and again about 2 months later to check that the conditioning is stable. These experimental lots are beloved at Sipi Falls, and (as with quality teams all over the world with a passion for the new and delicious) are by far the most deliberated. And thanks to the added uniqueness and cup quality, farmers selected for these microlot programs see the highest bonuses of anyone selling cherry to Sipi Falls.

Sipi Falls' honey coffees are layered with varied sugars and sweet spice, reminiscent of rum cake or snickerdoodle cookies. It is an incredible experience to see such a prime terroir be unlocked through quality processing, where just a matter of years ago it was often lost in transit.

Grower:	Producers organized around the Sipi Falls washing station	**Process:**	"Honey" Process: Cherries floated for density, Depulped and Dried on Raised Screens

Region:	Kapchorwa district, Mt. Elgon, Uganda	**Cultivar(s):**	Bourbon, SL14, SL28, and Blue Mountain
Elevation:	1800 – 2000 masl	**Harvest:**	October 2020 - February 2021

Green Analysis by Chris Kornman

This is an exceptionally clean coffee with an absolutely off-the-charts density reading.

Superlatives notwithstanding, there's plenty to like about this green from Sipi Falls. The screen sizes are well sorted with low tolerance for outliers beyond the 16-18 range. The moisture is delightfully precise, and the water activity quite low. Pair these metrics with the high density and you should have a coffee that retains its sensory characteristics for fairly long periods of storage as green, under good conditions.

As far as roasting, dense, dry coffees like this can usually soak up a lot of heat in the roaster, and may tend to be a little sluggish to develop color in the roaster (especially if you pump the gas early and are trying to mitigate your rate of rise around first crack). Keep an eye on the roasters notes for some advice on taking this coffee across the finish line.

Screen Size	Percent		Density
>20	0.80%		725 g/L (free settled)
19	5.31%		768 g/L (Sinar)
18	26.71%		
17	33.72%		**Total Moisture Content**
16	32.12%		10.0% (Sinar)
15	1.30%		
14	0.03%		**Water Activity**
≤13	0.00%		0.491 @ 22.64 (Rotronic)

Loring S15 Falcon Analysis by Doris Garrido and Chris Kornman

Doris took this coffee for a quick spin on the Loring this week after roasting and cupping the Ikawa roasts. Despite the official manufacturer's recommended minimum batch size of 6.6 lbs, we've been pretty happy with the 5.5lb baseline profile over the past few weeks. The weight is convenient in that it represents exactly ¼ of a Crown Jewel box.

Smaller batch sizes like this require a little restraint during early gas application, and Doris waited to touch the burner setting until she was well past the turning point. The roast progressed easily and she began to back off the

burner settings during the middle of Maillard phase, marking first crack at 6:22 with a perfectly even split of time during Drying and after Color Change.

Tapping the gas to its minimum setting at First Crack is usually a pretty good idea with a lot of momentum built up, but between the small batch size's low thermal mass and the coffees extraordinarily high density, the threat of a stall meant that Doris ended up nudging the end of the roast just a little.

This was a quick one, clocking under 8 minutes roasting time. Over 90 seconds of post crack development at such a short total roast time yielded a 20% development percentage, though the rate of rise remained quite low during this time. A healthy separation between the whole bean (62.8) and ground (54.6) ColorTrack readings offered evidence of a nicely developed light roast (I usually like to see a difference in these numbers between 5-10 to indicate a healthy rate of rise that neither bakes nor scorches after first crack).

The true evidence, as always, is in the cup. Elise Becker joined us at the table and we all agreed that the coffee was delightful. Doris noted the sweet candy-like aspects of the roast, Elise extolled the virtues of its Syrupy body and tart red fruit flavors (Dark Cherry, Cranberry), and I enjoyed the subtle spice notes of cumin, peppercorn, and lemongrass that accompanied its clean acidity.

Doris' roast exemplifies a nice introduction to the lighter aspects of this coffee's potential. Pour a little heat into the early stages if you're roasting a bigger batch, and regardless of your scale keep a close eye on the heat delta at and after first crack, and you shouldn't have too much trouble roasting this clean, dense, delicious honey process from Sipi Falls.

Bullet R1 IBTS Analysis by Evan Gilman

Fair warning, this was only my second roasting session on the Bullet. As I get used to working on this machine, you'll see my parameters and suggested approach change. Consider the analysis below as a good starting point, but not the end all be all of roasting on the Bullet. More to come!

For this roast, I started with 250g of coffee, 383F charge temperature, and F5 fan. My starting heat application was at P3, and I decided on using D6 after some trial and error in previous roasts. This roast is a good example of getting to know how powerful the fan is in the Bullet, especially for smaller batch sizes. Take a look at the graph below!

Having roasted a number of coffees from Uganda's Sipi Falls mill over the years on various machines, I was excited to give this lot a shot on the Bullet. While we usually see washed and natural from this mill, the honey was something new and different. What wasn't different was the remarkable density, strong screen size separation, and low water activity readings.

This being only my second roasting session on this machine, I made a couple foibles. That being said, the finished product was actually very nice, and I ended up drinking the entire sample I had on hand. Taking a look at my adjustments through the roast, you can see that there were quite a few manipulations here. After starting at P3 power and F5 fan, I raised power to P7 power and F2 fan at Turning Point. At the peak of my rate of rise, I increased fan speed to F4, then lowered power to P5. This resulted in a nice, even decrease in delta – until I used F6!

This was the biggest lesson I learned in a week on the Bullet: keep fan speed below F4 unless you're intending to end a roast. My adjustment to F6 led to a very steep drop in delta, and the coffee nearly stalled out. I increased power back to P7 for a short moment before crack, then slowly decreased to P3 until the end of roast. These manipulations resulted in a very strong 'flick' at the end of my roast, but this did not appear to cause any terrible effects in the cup due to how light this roast was.

Despite the imperfect roast, this coffee was very quaffable. My ratios of green/drying stage and Maillard were very nearly even – 41% and 43% respectively. Super bright passionfruit seed, honey sweetness, and a limey aftertaste really made this a refreshing cup. It did have some of the hallmarks of an underdeveloped coffee, however – slight yeastiness, generic 'green' flavor, and lack of clean sugary tastes.

The density of this coffee is something else. Make sure to give it lots of heat right up until the end of roast, and if you're using the Bullet, watch that fan speed! This coffee won't need a ton of airflow to lose momentum.

Ikawa Pro V3 Analysis by Chris Kornman

With limited time this week, Doris roasted just two profiles for this Uganda. We were pretty confident that one of our common roasts with a lower airflow profile for such a high density coffee wasn't the right choice, but were curious to find out if we preferred the "standard" profile or the slightly extended "Maillard +30s" which adds a little time to the roast between color change and first crack.

Doris logged first crack on the "standard" profile about 5 seconds before the cooldown cycle, however, the second profile achieved about 70 seconds of development after crack. On the table, the standard profile was clearly a little thin and slightly scorched, but had a nice acidity and showed off enough good character to give a decent preview of the coffee. However, the Maillard +30 roast yielded a sweet and complex cup, scoring higher in flavor, aftertaste, body, and balance.

For this coffee, we highly recommend balancing the ratios of your roast during drying and Maillard to roughly similar timeframes. The notes we gathered from this cupping were used to help us dial our Loring roast later in the week.

You can download the profile to your Ikawa Pro app here:

Roast 1: Crown Standard SR 1.0

Roast 2: Crown Maillard +30 SR 1.0

Brew Analysis by Colin Cahill

Mention this coffee in our tasting room and you'll hear excited commentary from senior staff and regular customers about exquisitely delicious lots from previous years. We've been watching the arrivals for this coffee with bated breath and celebrated its arrival by pulling out a bunch of our brewing devices for a bit of a marathon tasting session. While we will keep playing with this coffee here in the tasting room (possibly as an espresso or a dreamy nitro cold brew), we want to share some of our preliminary experiences with this whimsical coffee. We had delicious, complex brews from both cone brewers and immersion brewers, and I will share specifically about our favorites on the Saint Anthony Industries C70 and the AeroPress.

The C70 has been my go-to for naturals and honey-processed coffees that benefit from SAI's thicker filters that generally yield a light and clean brew. Starting with a classic recipe, with a dose of 18 grams of coffee ground at an 8 on our EK43, and with a dose of 300 grams of water across a bloom of 50 grams and two pulses (150 grams and a final 100 grams), we received a complex brew. With a slightly higher total brew time, TDS, and extraction percentage, this brew had a rich body and layers of flavor. We tasted fruits, flowers, and nuts, including almonds, cocoa, roses, dates, red grapes, fresh figs, and fresh apricots. Brewed to the same recipe, but with a coarser grind, we received a similarly complex brew with a lower TDS (1.2), yet with a syrupy body. This brew featured more tropical fruit notes (ripe papaya and pineapple) and a maple syrup sweetness. Our brew on another cone device—the Hario V60—was similarly rich in cocoa and fruity notes.

We've been playing with bypass brews with immersion devices recently, so we tried this coffee on the AeroPress. Our recipes involved immersing the coffee grinds in a total of 200 grams of water, and then bypassing the grounds and adding 100 grams of water to the resulting brew, for a total water input of 300 grams. Starting with a slightly coarsened grind (a 9 on our 16-digit EK43s faceplate), and a total brew time of 3:15, we yielded a brew with a relatively low TDS (1.16) and extraction percentage (17.95%). This brew had a creamy mouthfeel, the sweetness of molasses, and layers of chocolate-y notes, as well as bright, tart notes of raspberry and kiwi. Playing with a larger dose of 20 grams of coffee and a coarser grind (10 on our 16-digit EK43s faceplate), with everything else in line with the previous recipe, we ended up with a sweet and syrupy brew with dominant notes of dark cherry, pineapple, cola, root beer, and vanilla ice cream. This is a complex coffee full of surprises; expect to have fun playing with it!

Roast	Method	Grind (EK43s 16-digit)	Dose (g)	H2O (g)	Ratio	Bloom (g)	Bloom (s)	Total Brew Time	TDS	Ext%
Loring	C70	8	18	300	1:16.6	50	40	4:25	1.46	22.66
Loring	AeroPress	9	18	300	1:16.6	50	40	3:15	1.16	17.95